DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 395 913 SP 036 712

AUTHOR Lesar, Sharon; And Others
TITLE Preparing Elementary Education Teachers for Inclusive Settings: A Constructivist Teacher Education Program.
PUB DATE Apr 96
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, April 11, 1996).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Constructivism (Learning); Disabilities; Educational Change; Elementary Education; Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; *Inclusive Schools; Mainstreaming; Mentors; *Preservice Teacher Education; *Regular and Special Education Relationship; *Special Education
IDENTIFIERS *University of Tennessee Knoxville

ABSTRACT

Current efforts to reform special education have focused on the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings. The success of inclusion is contingent upon preparing general education teachers at the preservice level for inclusive classroom settings. This paper describes the development, implementation, and evaluation of an innovative preservice teacher education program in elementary education in the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Unit at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. This program possesses several unique features: alternative approaches to instructional delivery, curricula, and assessment; local school mentoring; and extensive field-based experiences. Evaluation of program outcomes were collected from mentoring teachers, school administrators and trainees to assess the impact of the program. (Contains 27 references.) (Author/ND)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 395 913

Preparing Elementary Education Teachers for Inclusive Settings: A Constructivist Teacher Education Program

Sharon Lesar, Ph.D.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Susan M. Benner, Ed.D.
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Habel, Ph.D.
Western Carolina University

Running Head: PREPARING TEACHERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Lesar

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This paper was prepared for the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New York, April 11, 1996. Address inquiries to Sharon Lesar, College of Education, 331 Claxton Addition, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996, (423) 974-4456.

SP036712

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

Current efforts to reform special education have focused on the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings. The success of inclusion is contingent upon preparing general education teachers at the preservice level for inclusive classroom settings. In this article, we describe the development, implementation and evaluation of an innovative preservice teacher education program in elementary education in the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Unit at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. This program possesses several unique features: alternative approaches to instructional delivery, curricula, and assessment; local school mentoring; and extensive field-based experiences. Evaluation of program outcomes were collected from mentoring teachers, school administrators and trainees to assess the impact of the program.

Preparing Elementary Education Teachers for Inclusive Settings: A Constructivist Teacher Education Program

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1975) requires school districts to educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Specifically, the IDEA requires states to establish procedures assuring that students with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students without disabilities. However, placing students with disabilities in educational settings as close as possible to the regular education environment has not been realized in most school districts (Danielson & Bellamy, 1989; York & Vandercook, 1990). One reason for this is that general education teachers have been inadequately prepared to provide meaningful instruction to students with a variety of disabilities (Kearney & Durand, 1992; Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). General education teachers do not perceive themselves as having the skills for adapting instruction to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities, and thus have doubts about the need for and feasibility of educating students with disabilities within the regular classroom (Coates, 1989; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991).

Recent studies indicate that state requirements have not changed for training general education teachers despite the passage of the IDEA; thus, the need to train prospective general education teachers in areas of special education remains imperative (Johnston, 1990). With the growing emphasis on inclusion, is the realization that general educators require competencies in both general and special education. The token three hour course in special education as a requirement for a regular teaching licensure has proven largely ineffective in equipping beginning teachers with the knowledge and skills required to integrate students with disabilities successfully into inclusive settings. Preparing teachers for inclusion requires additional competencies, skills and knowledge that must be integrated within their teacher education program.

This movement toward educating students with disabilities in regular education classrooms indicates a need to prepare general education teachers at the preservice level for inclusive or integrated classroom settings. Many, if not most, postsecondary schools of education inadequately prepare general education teachers for inclusive or mainstreamed classroom settings (Kearney & Durand, 1992; Morsink, 1988; Pugach & Allen-Meares, 1985). Specifically, Kearney and Durand (1992) found that postsecondary schools of education do not provide sufficient coursework and field experience to prepare general education trainees for integrated classroom settings.

In response to the call for preparing teachers for inclusive settings, the Inclusive Early Childhood Education Unit at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville was established to offer an integrated elementary education program. This preservice program is designed to prepare general education teachers who possess the competencies to teach children with a wide range of abilities in inclusive settings. Both general and special education faculty equally participate in and have responsibility for all aspects of the program. Such a model reflects the inclusiveness desired in "real world" settings where children with disabilities, children of minority populations, children of poverty, and other children at risk are educated in inclusive programs. Prospective teachers are prepared to work with **all** children through a

comprehensive, integrated program design. In this article, the development, implementation and evaluation of the program, which is now completing its second year of implementation, is described.

Program Purposes and Goals

The overarching purpose of this preservice training program is to prepare beginning general educators to work effectively with children representing a wide range of abilities and disabilities within regular-class settings. The specific goals of the program are:

1. To prepare qualified individuals to implement inclusive programs and services for children with disabilities successfully within regular education settings by (a) delivery of an alternative training program for students seeking elementary licensure and (b) using mentoring, field-based experiences, and integrated coursework;
2. To design and promote innovation through alternative approaches to instructional delivery, curricula, assessment, and faculty accountability; and
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of this training program in terms of (a) the completion of the program by the trainees, (b) the effectiveness of training using the problem-based learning modules, case-based method of instruction and alternative forms of trainee assessment, and (c) the perspectives of stakeholders in the program.

Goal 1: Program Design and Development

The Inclusive Early Childhood Education (IECE) Program evolved from a major restructuring process in the College of Education, designed to create an innovative college with the capacity to address today's educational issues, as well as those that will arise in the 21st century. New programs and interdisciplinary teams were formed that cut across traditional departmental lines. The IECE program is comprised of a team of six faculty who have expertise in multiple disciplines within education, including history and philosophy of education, early childhood education, special education, gifted education, teacher education, and qualitative research. The IECE program was designed as an alternative training program for students seeking elementary licensure, who elect to focus on the primary grades and develop skills in working with all students in inclusive settings.

The elementary education licensure program is designed as a five-year program, with students taking majors in the College of Arts and Sciences. Concurrently, they complete requirements for admission to teacher education, and take a minor in education. For students admitted into the IECE program, the minor is primarily completed during the spring semester of their senior year as one 15-hour block of integrated courses taught by the IECE core faculty. All of the faculty in the IECE program participate in the planning and delivery of this block, with each member holding responsibility for the development of instructional activities and assignments closest to his/her areas of expertise. Such an approach enables us to address the issues related to multicultural concerns and effective and alternative instructional practices for students with disabilities throughout the semester across all assignments, rather than as a segregated segment of the program or an isolated three hour course. The education portion of the program requires two years to

complete and produces students who hold a teaching certificate in elementary education with an early childhood specialization (grades K-4) and a Master's Degree in education.

The IECE program was formed with a specific commitment to a developmental constructivist perspective in our approach to training. Faculty within the program are committed to the use of an innovative interdisciplinary, collaborative approach to serving young children based on the assumption that children (and adults) construct their understandings in a developmental sequence. Children do not organize their worlds by subject matter areas or disciplines, and teachers should teach real content, integrating traditional subjects. Within our program we have chosen to model the constructivist approach by adhering to student choices in assignments and evaluations; student participation in the planning of curriculum; the use of critical thinking and active learning approaches to instruction; and adjustments and flexibility to accommodate individual needs.

3-D Training Model

In accordance with this basic structure, faculty from the IECE program have developed a three-phase training model based on **discovery, discipline**, and **divergence,** referred to as the 3-D Model. The term 3-D symbolizes that experiences within our program are arranged into levels of development with specific characteristics.

Five sources were influential in shaping the model which was created for our program: Gardner's (1983) work on multiple intelligences, Feldman's (1980) work on non universal development, Bloom's (1985) and Csikzentmahalyi's (1993) works on talent development, and works on learning and development by Vygotsky (1962), Pestalozzi (1907), and Whitehead (1929). From these sources we conceptualized teaching as a talent and concluded that a program which prepares teachers should parallel the development of talents. In our view, excellent teachers are analogous to excellent artists and scientists. The 3-D Model is useful as a means for organizing more specific descriptions of information, skills and roles which are markers for the development of talent.

The general sequence of discovery, discipline, and divergence guides the content exposure and depth experienced by students. In the discovery phase, new ideas are introduced, important concepts are explored, and taken-for-granted assumptions are challenged. Students read, discuss, debate, role-play, and practice solving real problems through case-based techniques. Excitement and high energy levels are typical at this stage, as students want to know everything at once. As students become familiar with basic information and ideas, skill development and reflection regarding values, curriculum development, and philosophical precepts should begin. The student is exposed to the range of roles and behavior one is expected to have in the field. Support is provided throughout this period as the new entrant into the area encounters puzzling and challenging situations.

The emphasis during the discipline phase is on developing the knowledge, skills, techniques, and dispositions that make an effective teacher. Much of this work is done during the initial portions of the internship year as students work with mentoring teachers, faculty from the university and master teachers from the schools. Periods of practice are longer and commitment to spending time developing those skills

are expected. The student becomes conversant in the jargon and customs of the field. The roles and behaviors of the professional teacher become more sharply defined. Skills within each role are acquired.

Toward the second half of the internship year, we anticipate that students will gradually develop the ability to move at least partially into the third phase, that of divergence. Divergence means taking what is known and creating effective adaptations that fit the needs of the individual contexts of teaching. For students who reach this level, basic understandings and skills having been acquired and practiced to a comfort level, so they can begin to expand, adapt, and personalize their skills and understandings. We realize that not all students will experience any divergence during their formal preservice training, however, if they internalize the nature of the three phase approach, they will see teaching as life-long development and take divergence to be the goal of an accomplished professional.

The 3-D model assumes that students will evolve through these phases at varying rates, experiencing new discoveries throughout their effective teaching careers. Figure 1 presents the types of activities embedded into the model. The training program is designed to assist students in evolving through the discovery, discipline, divergence phases based on ten identified roles of teachers. The roles are: instructor; human services worker (counselor/social worker); behavior manager; parent relations manager; public relations manager; team member; self (as a teacher); professional; executive data manager and analyst; and researcher. Discovery activities for each of these roles are incorporated into the spring semester of the senior year. While some activities can be postponed to the beginning of the discipline phase during the spring semester, the primary focus during this initial semester is that of discovery.

Insert Figure 1 here

Goal 2: Alternative Approaches

A new program concept requires new methods and components. We strive to offer innovative instructional excellence by providing alternative approaches to instructional delivery, curricula, and assessment. Students move through our program in cohort groups who participate together in their education experience, an arrangement that allows for flexible scheduling. All of our instruction is linked to field-based experiences (at least 50% of all work is done away from campus). Integration of "special" and "regular" education field-based experiences and course content ensures that students are trained in the skills needed to meet the needs of a diverse school population.

Program Content

The spring semester block during their senior year is organized around three different experiences for students--**instruction, field work**, and **academic circle**. On Monday and Friday mornings, students participate along with the core faculty team, in instructional activities, relying primarily on case-based and problem-based instructional methods of delivery with elimination of traditional lecture/testing instructional formats. Case-based instruction offers a mean of teaching application, decision-making and problem-solving skills that are critical in bridging the gap between theory and practice. In case-based instruction,

trainees are presented with case stories that describe situations comparable to those they are likely to encounter in their work. Case studies are written in a narrative format and describe children and families of diverse characteristics in a variety of settings. Each case presents realistic situations that require a professional (or group of professionals) who is described in the story to make a decision. Topics include cultural diversity, assessment, modifying instruction, classroom management, accommodation to individual differences, and professional roles and collaboration.

Problem-based learning modules are based upon a constructivist notion of learning. Trainees are presented with a series of real-life, not contrived, problems. The trainees' role is to generate questions relative to the problem, actively seek information and to consider alternative solutions to that problem collaboratively. The instructor's role is to guide the discussion and to introduce new information relative to the problem and the trainees' expressed needs. The process continues in repeated cycles with trainees gathering information, developing tentative solutions until a plan of action for the problem has been developed. Examples of learning modules that address problems on inclusion include organizing the physical environment of a classroom to promote the goals of a program, developing a classroom management plan taking into account individual differences, using IEP data to develop a coordinated instructional plan, and modifying instruction for included children.

Within the instructional context, we role model for our students the constructivist, integrated approach that we expect they will use in programs for children with diverse abilities. Alternative instructional practices and strategies include cooperative learning, team teaching, large- and small-group instruction, student choice, alternative assessment, multi-media technology, and peer coaching. Another example is evident in our approach to planning the spring block capstone assessment. A representative committee of students develops a capstone proposal that is then reviewed by the faculty and all students. Following the completion of agreed-upon changes to the proposal, the capstone assessment is finally approved by all faculty and students.

On Wednesdays, students split into groups and spend the whole day at one of five rotating field placements. The field-based sites are designed such that students spend a portion of the semester with both typically developing children and children with disabilities. The field placements include two elementary schools, a developmental preschool for students identified as at-risk for developmental delays, a preschool program for children with disabilities, and an integrated preschool program. On these days, the students observe and interact with a variety of classroom teachers who have collaborated with IECE faculty in the development of the curriculum.

Monday afternoons are reserved for Academic Circle, providing a seminar format for discussion of issues and readings that are most often student initiated and lead. The Academic Circle offers an opportunity to move students beyond the discovery level typical of this initial semester, allowing them to experience dissonance and tension in their development as teachers. The circle symbolizes inclusion. Everyone attending the seminar is in the circle and participates in the activities of the day. Examples of topics that academic circle seminars might include are: review of books, such as <u>There Are No Children</u>

Here by Alex Kotlowitz; the controversies surrounding outcomes-based education; professional collaboration and consultation; and understanding our personal cultural identity and attitudes toward others with differing cultural identities.

Professional Year Internship

Upon completion of the undergraduate degree, students begin a full-time year-long internship and program of study that follows the public school calendar. The internship year is viewed as a year of training in order to develop an array of teaching skills under the mentorship of a number of master teachers. Interns become part of the school faculty, participating in all aspects of school life, even taking their university courses on the school site, sometimes with school faculty and mentoring teachers serving with university faculty as co-instructors. The delivery of coursework during the internship year emphasizes the application of skills in "real world" settings. Effective alternatives for meeting individual students' needs are addressed for individual students and various classroom settings. In the spring semester of the internship year, students design and implement an action research project that demonstrates their ability to participate actively in critical thinking and problem solving about classroom practices.

Interns are assigned a mentoring professor from the faculty team to provide supervision, along with their mentoring teachers and school principals. Throughout the internship year, the mentoring professor collects information from direct observation of interns during scheduled classroom visitations. Consultation and collaboration with mentoring teachers, building principals, and instructional specialists are on-going, and provide the opportunity for identifying competency needs and additional support for individual interns. This model of teacher education is designed to assure that both the knowledge and skills in general education required in Tennessee and the professional components of licensure requirements are achieved.

Trainee Assessment

We are committed to the notion that each of us is a developing professional who is willing to work hard to learn to be the best educator possible. We believe the motivation for such learning should be centered in the learner and not in the external grading system. In short, we believe we should all work hard because we want to learn as much as we can from the opportunities we have and not be driven to work as hard as necessary to get an "A." All assignments within the program are evaluated as either "accepted" or "not ready." Faculty making assignments give direct feedback designed to improve understanding, skill, or knowledge. The purpose of the feedback is the improvement of learning, not justification of a grade. If an assignment receives a "not ready," the student continues to work on the assignment until it is at an "accepted" level. All students are responsible for keeping a reflective journal and a professional portfolio throughout their program. Portfolios are shared with other students periodically and submitted in along with a description and self-assessment of the contents. To insure continuity, faculty meet to discuss the progress of each student periodically during the term and at the end. Students are informed of the outcomes of these meetings and have the opportunity to discuss them with the faculty. Each student

participates in a capstone assessment activity that is evaluated by faculty and peers. Students may also elect to develop additional individual projects, submitted as proposed contracts to faculty for consideration.

Final trainee assessment occurs during the internship year, when each intern is formally observed and evaluated by cooperating school system personnel. If teaching evaluations indicate that the intern is performing successfully as a teacher, the internship year is credited as the intern's first year of teaching and a three-year teaching license is awarded. Additionally, interns develop and conduct action research projects in conjunction with their classroom duties. The interns then present their completed projects at a spring conference.

Changing Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

Faculty came together to create this new program based on the shared commitment to inclusiveness. Collectively, the faculty members of the program are working toward the accomplishment of our goals. Ownership for the program is shared and expertise across departmental boundaries and disciplines is acknowledged. Collaboration is emphasized in all interactions related to the programs' activities. This means that decision making within the program is also a collaborative activity. A consensus seeking mode dominates decision making, with equal consideration given to the views of all program participants, including students. All faculty attend Monday and Friday sessions and participate in instructional activities even when they do not hold primary responsibility for the scheduled activities.

Goal 3: Program Outcome Data

Both global outcome data (i.e., retention, graduate degree attainment) and multiple methods of qualitative data collection to obtain the perspectives of the "stakeholders" in the program (Greene, 1988, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mathison, 1994) are used to evaluate the effectiveness of the IECE program. Stakeholders are informed individuals who have vested interests in the performance of the program, and, for the purposes of this evaluation, include students enrolled in the program, the school administrators whose schools are the sites of year-long internships, and the mentoring teachers with whom students work during their internship. The objective of this approach is to obtain from the members of these groups their perspectives on the activities of the program. While what stakeholders think is enormously important, one cannot rely solely on their verbal reports. What they do and what others say about what they do are also critical forms of data. Therefore, this evaluation has made use of multiple methods of qualitative data collection—open-ended, individual and focus-group interviews, review of documents, and observations. While it is beyond the scope of this article to present a complete picture of the thematic structure of stakeholders' perspectives of the IECE program, the following discussion presents a set of perspectives about certain aspects of the program that stakeholders themselves cite as worthy of attention. The precise words of stakeholders (set off with quotation marks) appear whenever their words seem to express repeated themes or to provide illuminating statements of widespread points of view.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Certification and Graduate Degree Attainment

A total of 32 of the original 34 students from the first cohort completed the program on time and became certified elementary education teachers. One student decided to postpone her internship year because of personal commitments and another student was asked to leave the program because of his failure to meet the workload associated with the program. The first cohort represents a retention rate of 94.12%. With regard to graduate degree completion, up to this point 28 students have satisfied requirements of the graduate school and earned master's degrees. The remaining students indicated that they plan to complete the requirements for the master's degree during the next academic year.

A second cohort of 26 students just completed their undergraduate spring semester block and 23 of the students will begin their internship year this fall. Two of the students moved out of the area and another student postponed her internship until the following year.

The Undergraduate Spring Block

When the students in the two cohorts completed their undergraduate spring block, two themes emerged that exemplified their perspectives about their training experiences in this component of the program: (1) the challenge of conceiving knowledge and learning in a new way in the discovery phase of the 3-D model of talent development and (2) the quality of the relationship between faculty and students.

Conceiving knowledge and learning in a new way. The descriptions that students provided about their experiences in the spring undergraduate block suggest that they are equipped with contrasting epistemological points of view that influence their levels of comfort with various instructional approaches and their need for structure and support. These contrasting student responses to the instructional approaches in the spring semeste block reflect the two "modes" of thinking of undergraduate preservice teachers that Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1987) describe. For those in Mode A, the discovery phase of the 3-D model can create confusion because it challenges the information-processing view of knowledge and of learning that they bring with them to the program. According to this view, knowledge consists of concrete facts and learning involves acquisition, storag and retrieval of these facts. In addition, for students with a Mode A perspective, there is one right way to teach and learn that is characterized by high structure, little ambiguity, detailed instructions, concrete rewards, and immediate feedback. At the end of the spring semester block, one student expressed the still unresolved epistemological confusion of a Mode A preservice teacher.

> I was very confused about the purposes of this cohort. I thought you were going to teach me how to teach. I think this point should be explained to the next group. They may feel that after this semester they will know all they ever needed to know and that's just not true.

Preservice teachers in Mode B embrace a constructivist view of knowledge and learning that emphasizes arranging the conditions of learning so that learners can "discover" their own knowledge. They tend to be inner directed, more autonomous, and less conforming than Mode A preservice teachers, and are better matched with the more abstract and inductive instructional methods of the discovery phase of the 3-D model.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1987) acknowledge that they "overgeneralize" with this theoretical structure of preservice teachers' modes of thinking (p. 45). Nevertheless, they argue that faculty must become sensitive to

preservice teachers' view of knowledge and learning if faculty are to promote developmental growth that stimulates an epistemological shift from Mode A to Mode B—from information processing to constructivism. While it appears that a small number of students were not developmentally prepared for the full range of the instructional methods of the spring undergraduate block, there is evidence that many other students succeeded in completing the developmental task of bridging the epistemological gap between the information-processing view and the constructivist view. For these students, the instructional approaches of the undergraduate spring block opened up news ways of learning and knowing. At the end of the spring undergraduate block, one student described experiences that reveal a transformation in her view of teaching and learning from Mode A to Mode B.

> When I began this semester, I knew that I enjoyed the act of teaching. I felt that there was a definite way (or ways) in which teachers approached their job and I would be indoctrinated into the circle, per se. Our first sessions interested me but also frustrated me because I wanted to be given more specific information about how to solve problems. The cases we studied presented a myriad of problems but offered few specific solutions, and this left me dangling—uncertain about what skills I was learning.
>
> Somewhere toward the middle of the semester, or earlier, I began to realize that I needed to at least begin to formulate a personal philosophy about teaching. I became aware that I had vague and contradictory ideas about such vital issues as—what is the true role of schools in our country or what should be their role? Another issue was—Should children have choice and control over their learning and if so how much? It seemed that without clarification of my beliefs on these core questions, the specific techniques and methods were somewhat meaningless and lacked purpose.

This student's attention to "core questions" is evidence of her success at completing the developmental tasks of the discovery phase of the 3-D model of talent development. She is poised to move from discovery to discipline to develop "the specific techniques and methods" in her year-long internship that will make her an effective teacher.

The quality of the relationship between faculty and students. Another repeated theme was how the basic elements of the IECE program's integrated design—including collaboration between students and faculty in instructional planning and research; small group procedures; and performance-based assessment, grade contracts, and narrative reporting in lieu of traditional testing—shaped the quality of students' relationship with the faculty and with each other. Students valued the commitment of members of the faculty to the role of co-learner, to democratic processes, and to problem-based learning modules and case-based instruction and alternative forms of assessment. The trainee assessment procedure described above has been largely successful in establishing and maintaining this role for faculty and in promoting learning objectives, rather than performance objectives, in students.

For many students, the demonstration of care and commitment to their learning and to young children by members of the faculty is deeply appreciated. One student's observation about a member of the faculty illustrates this: "At our first meeting in the fall Dr. H was so emotional. I was so excited! Dr. H felt the

way I feel about children. He really cared. I don't see that often in college professors. I couldn't believe it!"

In addition, students all reported high satisfaction with every facet of the program: grading format, faculty team teaching approach, integration of coursework, field-based experiences, use of case-based and problem-bas instruction, small group and cooperative group learning, and alternative assessment as measured on course evaluation surveys.

The Professional Year Internship: The Perspectives of Interns, Mentoring Teachers and Administrators

Multiple focus groups, individual interviews, and participant observation were used as a form of triangulatio to obtain perceptions of the internship year from three sources, interns, their mentoring teachers, and administrators of the school sites. Triangulation and member checks were used to assure rigor of the data and it analysis (Guba, 1981; Patton, 1990). Major themes that emerged from individuals within each group of respondents (i.e., interns, teachers, administrators) were highly consistent. Explanations of major themes that emerged and examples that demonstrate each category are presented.

Status as professionals. Unlike many student-teaching programs, the IECE program's internship allows student interns to experience both the entire school day and the entire school year, with the full range of varied activities. Interns report that this schedule allows then to establish clear roles in the classroom. The mentoring teacher counts on the intern, and the students in the class expect to see the intern everyday. This increases the intern's status as a professional and expands the limits and boundaries of the standard student-teacher role with respect to the intern's relationship as a junior colleague with a mentoring teacher, as an authority with students, and as a professional with parents.

One group of interns observed that they "get reality right from the start—parent conferences, faculty meeting long hours, planning... We are here all day all year... We are really part of the school and the classroom... W feel ready for next year." An administrator echoed this observation. "When interns leave our school, they are ready for any K-5 job—multi-age, open space, inclusion environment... For the first time, we are implementin true apprentice relationship—mentoring is going on in a careful, methodical way... They don't just see, they ge to participate in how to start the year, how to get to know the students, how to assess where the students are."

For one administrator, interns in the IECE program "are more professional and sophisticated than other students we have seen. It's clear that they were exposed to school culture [prior to their internship] to a much greater extent than other students whom we've seen."... When they came to us, they "resembled the profile of a first-year teacher." Another administrator noted the interns' willingness to engage in innovative instruction: "I s them taking risks... The interns may or may not have had training with some of the innovative activities at our school; e.g., cooperative learning and whole language... I really admire their willingness and bravery at getting involved in innovative activities... This says something for the university—bringing them up in classes to try different techniques, to take risks."

While the majority of interns report that they are generally pleased with the degree of responsibility and autonomy granted to them by the structure of the internship and by their roles within the school and their respective classrooms, others have had alternative experiences. In fact, interns characterize their relationships

with their mentoring teachers, and mentoring teachers with their interns, in a variety of ways. Some intern-ment relationships are characterized by genuine connection and collegiality. In other intern-mentor relationships the intern remains in the position of subordinate and is granted little freedom and responsibility. Some interns need more direction and critical feedback from their mentoring teachers, while others need more freedom and responsibility than their mentoring teachers allow.

Workload. The variety of perspectives among interns, mentoring teachers, and administrators about both the amount of work required of interns and the value of some of the specific assignments signals that the issue of intern workload is problematical. The IECE's internship is rigorous. Interns not only teach, but they also enrol in eight hours of course work during the fall semester. During the spring semester, they complete an action research project and a professional portfolio as well as prepare for both the National Teachers Exam (NTE) and comprehensive exams. For some of the interns, this combination of teaching and "academic" assignments produces an unreasonable workload in terms of the quantity of work required. In addition, some of these assignments are perceived as "busy work," that is, tasks that do not address directly their immediate classroom needs.

While some school personnel believe the assignments distract the interns from the business of the classroom and hence reduce their teaching effectiveness, others see the value of the interns' assignments. One administrato spoke of the value of the assignments, the portfolios, and the action research projects as "things that really affect our kids and the ways they learn" and as activities that "require professionalism and reflection." This administrator further suggested that it would be valuable to the mentoring teachers themselves to participate in similar activities.

Applying alternative instructional approaches/Adjusting to the traditional classroom. One criterion for selecti the school sites of the year-long internships is the degree to which the school offers interns opportunities to engage in alternative approaches to instructional delivery, including whole language instruction, the use of cooperative learning structures, and alternative assessments such as portfolios and performances. While many interns are placed in schools that provide rich opportunities to make use of these alternative approaches, others find themselves in more traditional classrooms in which neither cooperative learning, nor whole language, nor other alternative approaches to instructional delivery are in use. Moreover, some interns anticipate employment i settings in which they might not have the freedom to implement the full range of alternative approaches to instructional delivery in which they have been trained. These interns request guidance about how to adjust to more traditional classrooms. One group of interns observed: "We can't come in and expect to change the schoc . . . We have to be prepared for what we see in the school. . . . If our students are trained to do individual seat work, then we can't suddenly do cooperative learning."

In addition, some interns have seen traditional approaches to instructional delivery put to effective use and suggest that the traditional be balanced with the alternative in their own training. One group of interns suggested "We could have used some exposure to the traditional language arts to prepare for what we see in class now... We're trained to turn up our noses at basals [basal readers]. We believe in whole language and cooperative learning, but we need to see the strengths in other methods."

This evaluation, based on the perspectives of selected stakeholders in the IECE program—students enrolled i the program, the school administrators, and the mentoring teachers—reveals some of the successes and some of the continuing challenges of a comprehensive, integrated program design. Most students have succeeded in completing the developmental task of the discovery phase of the 3-D model of talent development during the spring semester block, but some have been confused by the constructivist character of the various instructional approaches. During the spring semester block, the faculty and students have been largely successful at establishing and maintaining relationships of mutual respect and regard. For interns, mentoring teachers, and administrators, the degree of responsibility and autonomy granted to interns by the structure of the post baccalaureate internship year grants them opportunities to assume status as professionals. The question of inter workload—of how to combine "academic" assignments with the business of the classroom—remains unresolve Also unresolved is the question of how to balance the emphasis on whole language, collaborative learning, and alternative approaches to assessment in the training of interns with some attention to the more traditional method of instruction that still prevail in many classrooms.

Conclusion

In recent years, court interpretations of the least restrictive environment mandate indicate a trend toward greater inclusion for students with disabilities (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). Special education personnel, for example, are likely to provide increased consultant services and team teaching with general educators so that children with disabilities can be served through classroom instruction rather than being removed and separated for special education. This change alone would require the content of preparation programs for general educators to contain considerably more coursework and field experience in effective methods for serving individual needs and consultation methods. Such preparation may enhance the system's ability to educate in general, since the specialized preparation to serve students with disabilities and gifted students can only improve a teacher's ability to serve typical children. By receiving training that allows them to teach heterogeneous groups, employ a variety of teaching strategies, and collaborate with other teachers and specialists, these general educators will then better enable all children to learn.

The Inclusive Early Childhood Education Program described in this article is designed to prepare general educators, with a focus on improving the quality of educational experiences for children with disabilities while they are in regular elementary classroom settings. With the current educational reform movement calling for an end to separate teacher education and "special education" teacher preparation programs (Lily, 1989; NASBE, 1992; Will, 1986), an inclusive teacher preparation program training future teachers to meet the needs of all children is crucial to move toward an inclusionary system of education. Our experience following two years of implementation indicates a high degree of success in implementing a preservice teacher education program that prepares teachers for inclusive settings. The time has come for teacher preparation programs to restructure their preservice general education training programs so that teachers are adequately trained to meet the needs of all children within inclusive programs. The design, development, and implementation of the program described in this article may serve to inform others to take the initiative to restructure their teacher education programs.

REFERENCES

Bloom, B.S. (Ed.). (1985). *Developing talent in young people*. New York: Ballantine.

Coates, R.D. (1989). The regular education initiative and opinions of regular classroom teachers. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 22*, 532-536.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1993). *Talented teenagers: The roots of success and failure*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Danielson, L.C., & Bellamy, G.T. (1989). State variation in placement of children with handicaps in segregated environments. *Exceptional Children, 55*, 448-455.

Feldman, D.H. (1980). *Beyond universals in cognitive development*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Gardner, Howard. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books

Greene, J. C. (1988). Stakeholder participation and utilization in program evaluation. *Evaluation Review, 12*, 91-116.

Greene, J. C. (1994). Qualitative program evaluation: Practice and promise. In N. K. Denzin & Y, S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research: A practical guide* (pp. 530-544). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Guba, E.G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Educational Communication and Technology Journal, 29*, 75-92.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. (1975).

Johnston, N.S. (1990). School consultation: The training needs of teachers and school psychologists. *Psychology in the Schools*, 27, 51-56.

Kearney, C.A. & Durand, V.M. (1992). How prepared are our teachers for mainstreamed classroom seating? A survey of postsecondary schools of education in New York state. *Exceptional Children*, 59, 6-11.

Lily, M.S. (1989). Teacher preparation. In D.K. Lipsky & A. Gartner (Eds.), *Beyond separate eduction, quality education for all*, Baltimore: Brookes. (pp. 143-157).

Mathison, S. (1994). Rethinking the evaluator role: Partnerships between organizations and evaluators. *Evaluation and program planning, 17*, 299-304.

Morsink, C.V. (1988). Preparing teachers as collaborators in special education. *Clearing House, 61*, 317-319.

National Association of State Boards of Education (1992). *Winners All: A call for Inclusive schools* . Alexandria, VA: NASBE.

Osborne,Jr. A.G., & Dimattia, P. (1994). The IDEA's least restrictive environment mandate: Legal implications. *Exceptional Children, 61*, 6-14.

Patton, M.Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Pestalozzi, J.H. (1907). *How Gertrude teaches her children* (L.E. Holland & F.C. Turner, Trans.). London: Swan Sonnenschein.

Pugach, M.C., & Allen-Meares, P. (1985). Collaboration at the preservice level: Instructional and evaluation activities. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 8*, 3-11.

Semmel, M.I., Abernathy, T.V., Butera, G., & Lesar, S. (1991). Teacher perceptions of the regular education initiative. *Exceptional Children, 56*, 9-24.

Sprinthall, L., & Sprinthall, N. A. (1987). Preservice teachers as adult learners: A new framework for teacher education. In M. Haberman & J. Backus (Eds.), *Advances in teacher education* (Vol. 3, pp. 35-56). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962). *Thought and language* (E. Hanfmann & G. Vakar, Trans.) Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press. (Original work published 1934).

Whitehead, A.N. (1929). The aims of education. New York: The Free Press.

Will, M. (1986). Educating children with learning problems: A shared responsibility. *Exceptional Children, 52*, 411-416.

York, J., & Vandercook, T. (1990). Strategies for achieving an integrated education for middle school students with severe disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 11(5)*, 6-16.

Teacher Roles	Discovery	Discipline	Divergence
Instructor	Lesson plans Teaching Methods Teacher Manuals Learning Centers	Write long and short range instructional goals and objectives Write lesson plans and unit plans Form groups for instruction Use of computers for instruction Teach content	Individualization and adaptation, integration of curricula
Human Services Worker (counselor/social worker)	Identification of community resources available to assist families Awareness of child within a context	Listening skills Appropriate referrals of families to community resources Recognition of abuse/neglect and appropriate follow-up	Creativity in problem-solving and resource allocations Crisis intervention
Behavior Manager	Behavior management theories Child development	Manage class time, activities Establish and implement management plans	Offer diversity and variance in behavioral outcomes based on child needs
Parent Relations Manager	Understanding of family systems theory Communications	Parent conferences Notes home Phone calls Use of parents as volunteers	Collaborative partnerships with parents Parent training programs
Public Relations Manager	Awareness of and participation in community groups	Presentations to community groups Fund raising efforts	Initiation of new programs within the school community
Team Member	Understanding of self and culture	Team decision making	Analysis and improvement of team functioning
Self (as a teacher)	Membership in professional organizations Attendance at conferences and workshops	Self-assessment Reflective teaching	Designing and implementing a professional development plan
Professional	Record keeping	Responsibility within professional organizations	Plan and conduct professional workshops Assume leadership in professional organizations
Executive Data Manager and Analyst	Research principles Study research done by others	Tracking student performance Maintaining attendance records	Seeking patterns in child performance and illness, absences
Researcher		Conduct supported action research projects Analyze research results	Engage in ongoing self-initiated action research projects Interpret research results and convert into classroom implications

Figure 1 3-D Training Model